

## 5.5 Planted or Tame Grassland

**Area:** 5,350,000 acres

**Description and Overall Condition:** This landscape component includes prairie that has been converted to cropland and then re-planted to hayland, tame or native grasses. Hayland constitutes approximately 4.4% of the state. Planted alfalfa is the most common hay crop. Hay may be cut up to four or five times throughout the growing season. Haying earlier than July 15, or before nesting birds have fledged, can result in bird mortality from the machinery. Restrictions on haying occur in some areas such as road ditches. As of 2005, CRP grassland constitutes approximately 7.4% of the state and can be found in every county. It is presumed larger tracts of CRP are more beneficial than smaller tracts. These larger tracts, in concert with surrounding landscape features, are a focus area of this landscape component. CRP is generally left idle although the 2002 Farm Bill authorized managed haying and grazing of CRP. Producers can hay or graze CRP once every three years, keeping outside of the primary nesting season defined as April 15-August 1. The number of acres of hayed and grazed CRP has and continues to increase as a result. A large number (1.7 million acres) of CRP contracts are set to expire in 2007, which would then result in the loss of approximately half the acreage of CRP in North Dakota. Tame grasslands are widespread throughout the state on wildlife management areas, waterfowl production areas, and other publicly owned land.

**Predominant Natural Vegetation:**

Grasses: smooth brome, crested wheatgrass, intermediate wheatgrass, tall wheatgrass, big bluestem

Forbs: alfalfa, sweet clover

**Associated Species of Conservation Priority:**

Birds	Mammals	Reptiles/Amphibians
American Bittern Northern Harrier Swainson's Hawk Sharp-tailed Grouse Willet Upland Sandpiper Marbled Godwit Wilson's Phalarope Short-eared Owl Sedge Wren Lark Bunting Grasshopper Sparrow Baird's Sparrow Le Conte's Sparrow Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow Chestnut-collared Longspur Dickcissel Bobolink	Arctic shrew Pygmy Shrew Plains Pocket Mouse Hispid Pocket Mouse Richardson' Ground Squirrel	Plains Spadefoot Canadian Toad Smooth Green Snake Western Hognose Snake

**Other Characteristic Wildlife:**

Birds: American wigeon, green-winged teal, mallard, blue-winged teal, Northern shoveler, gadwall, red-tailed hawk, gray partridge, ring-necked pheasant, killdeer, mourning dove, Western kingbird, Eastern kingbird, horned lark, American crow, common yellowthroat, vesper sparrow, Savannah sparrow, Western meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, brown-headed cowbird

Mammals: Northern short-tailed shrew, white-tailed jackrabbit, snowshoe hare, Franklin's ground squirrel, thirteen-lined ground squirrel, Northern pocket gopher, olive-backed pocket mouse, Western harvest mouse, deer mouse, Northern grasshopper mouse, prairie vole, meadow vole,

meadow jumping mouse, Western jumping mouse, coyote, red fox, raccoon, badger, striped skunk, white-tailed deer, moose

Reptiles and Amphibians: American toad, Great Plains toad, Woodhouse's toad, Northern leopard frog, chorus frog, tiger salamander, plains garter snake, common garter snake

### 5.5.a Focus Area: CRP

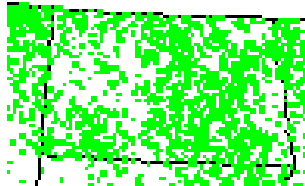
**Area:** 3,340,000 acres (1,350,000 ha)

**Description and Condition:** CRP grasslands are found in every county in the state. Currently, the exact location, size, and expiration dates for CRP are unavailable. Once that information is obtained, larger CRP tracts in conjunction with priority surrounding landscape features can be identified as of particular importance to SoCP favoring larger grassland patches.

**Key Species of Conservation Priority**

Birds: sedge wren, lark bunting, grasshopper sparrow, Baird's sparrow, Le Conte's sparrow, bobolink, dickcissel

One dot = 3,000  
acres of CRP  
under contract.



*Typical planted grassland.*

### 5.5.b Conservation Problems and Actions for Planted or Artificial Prairie

PLANTED OR TAME GRASSLAND					
CONSERVATION PROBLEM	CONSERVATION ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS			
Direct Loss of Habitat					
Expiration of CRP contracts in 2007 would result in the loss of approximately 1.7 million acres in North Dakota.	Work with Northern Great Plains Workgroup partners to promote automatic re-enrollment of existing CRP and redesigned ranking criteria for new CRP sign-ups.	NDGFD FSA NRCS USFWS PPJV NGPJV	NDNRT DU Delta TNC Audubon PF		
Habitat Degradation					
Over-utilization of CRP due to haying or grazing.	Extend the time period between haying and grazing (i.e. from 3 year to 5 year rotation).	NDGFD FSA NRCS USFWS PPJV NGPJV	NDNRT DU Delta TNC Audubon PF		
	Promote mid-term required management (i.e. prescribed burning, interseeding, and managed haying or grazing).				
Early cutting of tame grass (i.e. prior to July 15).	Provide incentives to defer or idle.				
	Provide other sources of hay.				
Under-utilization of tame grass.	Implement haying, grazing, or fire management to obtain desired habitat condition for SoCP.	NDGFD USFWS NRCS			
Invasive and Noxious Species					
Noxious weeds (e.g. leafy spurge, Canada thistle, salt cedar).	Control noxious weeds through biological and chemical methods	NDGFD NDSLD USFWS USFS NRCS	NDWCA NDSUEXT	Private Landowners	
Woody encroachment.	Use fire or other tools to prevent woody invasion of grassland.	NDGFD NDSLD USFWS USFS NRCS			
Data Gaps					
Lack of baseline information on SoCP.	Survey areas of data gaps. Conduct research/surveys to establish baseline information on SoCP.	NDGFD NDSLD USFWS USFS NPWRC PPJV NGPJV	DU TNC	Volunteers Universities	
Conservation Awareness					
Knowledge on the value of planted grassland, particularly CRP, and the potential loss of wildlife if CRP were to expire.	Create informational brochures, use tools such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and public forums, to inform citizens on the need for conservation of fish and wildlife resources and the value of CRP.	NDGFD USFWS NRCS	DU Delta TNC Audubon NDSUEXT		